T 775
.B1 S7
Copy 1

THE TENNESSEE CENTENNIAL

BY NATHANIEL STEPHENSON.

T175
B 87

THE TENNESSEE

CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION

MR. NATHANIEL Wright STEPHENSON

IN THE

CINCINNATI COMMERCIAL-TRIBUNE

APRIL 9, 1897

[Published by Permission]

NASHVILLE, TENN.
BRANDON PRINTING COMPANY
1897

T775
.B1S7

Gift
Mrs. Opal L. Kunz
Sept. 13 1934

THE
TENNESSEE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION

MR. NATHANIEL STEPHENSON, IN THE CINCINNATI COMMERCIAL-TRIBUNE, APRIL 9, 1897.

A CONTRAST.

The Tennessee Centennial, at Nashville, considered as a spectacular effect, has one marked superiority to the late Columbian Exposition at Chicago. In the "White City" there was no sense of depth. It was all foreground. In whatever direction one looked there was nothing whatever but lath and plaster, gilt and tinsel. Nowhere could one look out beyond the temporary splendor of the passing show and rest one's imagination with a glimpse of the permanent and the historic. Now at Nashville things are different. Standing on the "Rialto," here, and facing eastward, one beholds a great white statue of Athene; beyond her, the replica of the Parthenon; and beyond that, and around about, white arches, glittering domes, reaches of pale-green waters, deep green stretches of lawn that have golden tones in the sunshine; brightness, lightness; long perspectives of white wall; shadowy darkness in arch after arch; a world of gleam and glitter, a fascinating insubstantiality that has sprung suddenly out of the earth, and shall return whence it was digged. But this is not all. While

still standing upon the Rialto, wheel about and face eastward. The direction of the bridge is continued in a broad avenue that falls away straight in front of you amid shelving lawns and scattered trees. It curves to the left and disappears. The eye, however, still ranges on. Bright sunshine and blue sky overhang a wide valley, and beyond the valley there are many houses. Among them low-lying clouds of smoke blend hazily with the blue of distance and billow upward along a ridge crowded with buildings. Here and there a tower shoots high above the haze. A spire top catches the sunlight and glitters like a jewel. Straight in front of you, at the very center of the view, crowning and dominating the whole vista, veiled a little by gray smoke, softened by the blue of the horizon and backgrounded by blue of heaven, there is uplifted against the clouds the historic State House of Tennessee.

The scenic value of this imaginative undertone, so to speak, which is possessed by the Nashville Exposition, can not be overestimated. No one can stand upon the Rialto, catch both views which it commands, and not receive a peculiar impression that will remain with him throughout the fair. As he descends the slope of the Rialto, to lose himself amid the maze of the Exposition, the consciousness of the background of the picture goes with him. For that very reason the bright glitter of what is immediately before his eyes is all the more attractive. He knows that he has but to turn his head to catch again the distant presence of historic fact; the whole of this unsubstantial pageant, through which he moves and laughs and takes his ease, this world of white and gold, and green and blue, has heightened every gleam of color by the somber contrast of that far-away veil of smoke, above which towers the Capitol, and within which, for them that have ears to hear, the cannon of the past still sound.

A QUESTION.

It is this accompaniment played by the distant city to the spectacle of the fair that makes the present exhibition of such peculiar interest. The Tennessee Centennial, when its gates are opened to the world, will exhibit again the shifting variegated pageant that was seen a while back at Chicago. And across the wide valley the city will exhibit the antithesis. On the one hill, there will be the changes of light and shade that are due to the passing of sunshine and shadow. But across from it, on the other hill, there are the changes that mark the presence of human misery. The rolling masses of smoke eddy in and out among the steep slopes of the city, settle about the base of the Capitol, or stream up upon an idle wind and wrap the Capitol in grey shadow. They are the banner of the modern city, and the modern city is another name for woe. All through the pageant of the fair there will abide this double game of hide and seek—on the one hill, with the light of heaven; on the other, with the dusk of the modern struggle for existence. It will be hard indeed to walk through the Tennessee Centennial, with this vast duality of suggestion—for such, to the imaginative observer, it will be—forever ringing its changes, and not ask oneself continually: "To what result is all this pageant of American material progress going forward?"

QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY.

The Centennial buildings lie upon the west side of a valley that is one of the boundaries of the city of Nashville. They occupy, perhaps, the middle of the slope, and the summit which rises behind them is within the Centennial grounds. In extent these grounds are much smaller than were those of the Columbian Exposition. But that is nothing against them. There are

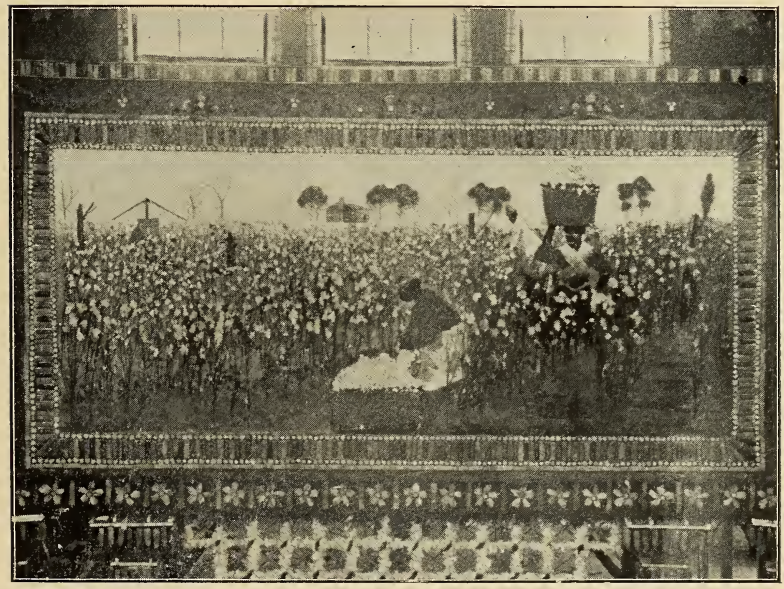
still too many people, who have not yielded to the gospel of pretence, to make mere bigness a positive essential to success. The Centennial gains, if anything, in the absence of those immense spaces of emptiness, such as the basins at Chicago, which served but to dwarf the buildings surrounding them. This is not saying that the Centennial is better than the Chicago Fair; merely, that it has eschewed one of its predecessor's mistakes.

Between the two exhibitions there is a certain degree of resemblance. Perhaps the truest way to put it would be to say that Chicago set a general style for fair architecture which is still in possession of the field. Here and there one gets a view, at Nashville, that is rather like Chicago. The view south from in front of the Agricultural Building has something of the character of the view straight out from the portico of Chicago's Art Building. In one case, at least, the Nashville architects have followed and improved the work of Chicago. The Agriculture Building is a new version of the Columbian Administration Building. The dome, however, is much lower, it is set in the midst of four smaller domes, and the wings of the building contain four other domes. The result is a complete disappearance of that top-heavy effect which characterized the Administration Building. The Nashville design presents a central dome so re-enforced by its clump of smaller domes as to have the strength without the heaviness of a pyramid.

SOMETHING RICH AND STRANGE.

The interior of this building, on the contrary, is one of the things for which the designers of the Centennial have had no suggestion elsewhere. At present the decorations are completed in but small part, and are somewhat obscured by scaf-

folding. But even now one can catch a hint of unique effects unseen before. A sort of Tudor roof is composed of three rows of pendants running the whole length of the building. The central row is open lattice work of cotton, soft, white, downy. The side rows are of gray moss that hangs in air with such a suggestion of filmy lightness that one expects, each moment, to see it begin to float upward. High up in the dome there is a series of colossal pictures—a cotton field, a harvest ride, a



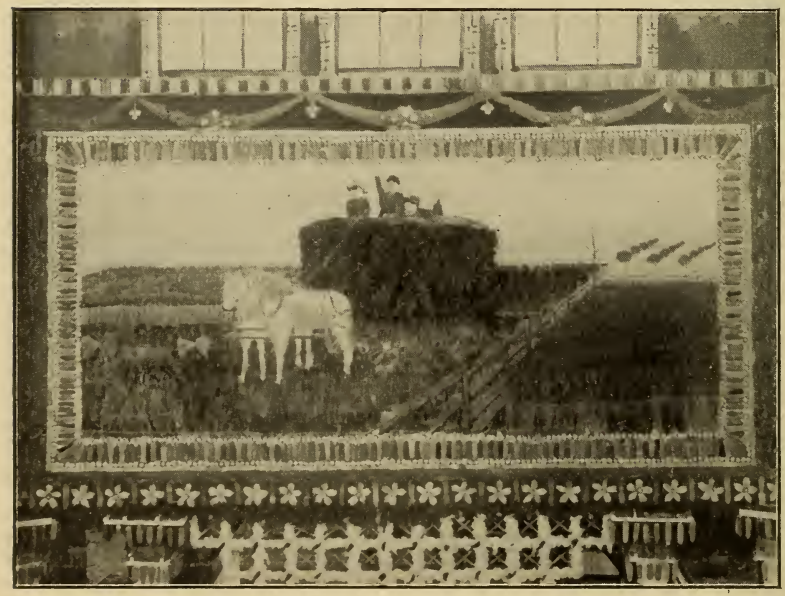
A COTTON FIELD—AGRICULTURE BUILDING

pasture with horses, a group of cattle—all cunningly done in seeds. Above these, is a striking decoration made of oats and sedge; and beneath, tall columns are wrapped with green cedar on their upper half and with yellow corn during the lower. Of course, such decoration is always more interesting than beautiful, but there can be few more strange and surprising effects than is this agricultural dome, set upon its green and yellow pillars and having all about it those snow-white pendants, sur-

rounded by ghostly blue-gray moss, waving slowly as if an army of invisible giants had suddenly been revealed to sight in their beards and in nothing else.

A CITY SET ON A HILL.

In the main, the Nashville Exposition is sufficiently unlike that of Chicago to forbid comparison. This one is essentially



A HARVEST RIDE—AGRICULTURE BUILDING.

a city set upon a hill. Water plays but a slight part in the scenic effect. Its place is taken by vegetation. Chicago, on sunny days, was a study in blue and white and gold; Nashville will be one in green and white and gold. One almost wishes that the hill effect could have been carried out more consistently; that the Parthenon could have stood upon the very summit of the hill and the other buildings descended from it in sweeping terraces. Such a plan would have given oppor-

tunities for the use of one of architecture's most beautiful features, the broad staircase. But it would also have increased the cost of shipment of exhibits to such a degree that, probably, it could not be thought of. Even without this thoroughgoing application of the up-and-down suggestion, the Centennial makes distinctly an aerial effect. It is a city in air, a city set on a hill that can not be hid.

NATURE'S PANORAMA.

And with such a city, the atmosphere and its changes are a matter of first moment. Here, again, Nashville is fortunate. It possesses one of those rich, hazy atmospheres where every shadow has an inclination to look blue and the horizon is royal purple. On one of these days in spring, with inconstant sunshine glimmering across the world, stabbing suddenly point after point and trailing after it a light that is soft blue-gray, the succession of sunshine and shadow along both slopes of the valley is like a panorama in a dream.

PRISMATIC SHADOWS.

To see the whole effect of it, go up upon the hill, behind the fair, late in the afternoon. The sun is low and strikes across the grass with that glistening brightness which is peculiar to the hour. The turf, in very truth, has changed to a sheet of emerald lit from within by invisible golden fire that you feel and almost see. Your shadow lies upon it in a streak of furry velvet. Move back until the tip of your shadow falls upon some spot you can locate with exactness, then pace the distance, and you find it is twelve yards at least.

And now, suddenly, the grass changes back from the sheet of emerald full of glinted sunshine to an ordinary green, dark

and lusterless. In another instant the whole foreground, with its cluster of great white buildings, has fallen dark. A bank of shadow is moving straight eastward and another bank of darkness is rising to meet it. A moment before, the Capitol stood out white and distinct, the crown of a mount of houses, with the smoke blown away or downward, but in some way gone from sight. Now, as the wave of shadow rolls eastward, the smoke ebbs back and streams up in a thin bluish veil. The twin towers of Vanderbilt University, away to your right hand, have become the register of the depth of the wave. A black line moves steadily up them. It engulfs the whole middle distance and creates by contrast a momentary brightness of hazy, smoky splendor, just beyond it, at the base of the Capitol. A puff of wind sings along the valley; for one minute the smoke opens; the Capitol stands forth, white and bright, in the midst of the heavens; and then the wave overflows the towers of Vanderbilt, swallows up the Capitol and sweeps away into the east.

But presently the Agriculture Building, far to your extreme left, lightens a little, then a little more, then suddenly begins to gleam and twinkle, casting back the sunshine from every miniature facet of its concrete. It is the one point of brightness in the whole vista. The other buildings of the foreground lie in cool dusk. The middle distance is a vague blue hollow. To the right, behind the towers of the university, the far bank of smoke has blended with the blue of the horizon into stormy purple. Straight in front, on the far edge of the valley, the Capitol is a lowering shadow.

The beam of sunshine moves slowly southward. Building after building starts out of the clear dusk, catches the sunshine at a million points, and begins to glitter like a jewel. Overhead the sky has become a sapphire. On the right a clump

of red brick buildings drink in the sunlight and become warmly lustrous. The towers of the university catch the brightness, and flash forth into shining distinctness against their banks of purple. Slowly the middle distance, the hollow of the valley, fills and brightens with the sunshine. At last, at a final bound, all of a sudden, the brightness flashes along the sky, cloud and smoke and dusk leap back before it, and, there, upon its hilltop, the mass of houses shining brightly at its feet, the bright blue sky at its back, is the white bulk of the Capitol.

Of such a nature is the transformation that is forever going on in the landscape about the Centennial. The gamut of aerial colors is endless. From the intense gold-green, the blinding bright glare of unclouded sun, to the dusk of shadowy purple, when the sun has gone from sight, the sky is banked with cloud and the Capitol faint with distance, from the one to the other, there is a range of golds, greens, blues and grays that is as brilliant and as changeful as would be a kaleidoscope of prisms.

TRANSPLANTED ART.

But as one looks down upon all this shifting, transitory splendor of the changing air, one feels that he has seen it, or something very like it, somewhere, once before. His fancies go back, perhaps, to the "White City" at Chicago, and he remembers where he looked for its originals and where he found them. And then in an instant he has the clue.

It is curious how much America has begged, borrowed or otherwise secured from France. The Americans have learned in writing, not wisely but too well, from the French novel. From France, four out of five American painters have learned—what they have learned. From Paris, the architects

of the Columbian Exposition got most of their suggestions. The Place du Carousal they magnified—and some of us think spoiled—and got the Court of Honor. The Rue de Rivoli they went one better of its own sort, and got the interminable arcades along the canals. The opera they varied in a hundred ways, and got all sorts of things. But the finest thing in Paris they never touched at all. And of just that Nashville, whether consciously or by mere grace of accident, has caught an echo. There is a hint, in this view to eastward, which reminds one of the shining lawns, the bright masses of building in the foreground, the distant background of towers and domes, with sunshine and shadow drifting across them alternately, that are Paris from the Trocadero.

ROMANCE OF LANDSCAPE.

The Centennial, then, is merely the central point of a charming natural phenomenon. It has been set down in the midst of a bold hill country that is very nearly mountainous, on the edge of an historic city, surrounded by a park-like landscape. A recent verse-maker has described another part of America in these lines:

* * * "A shadowy nest of hills
That are almost low-browed mountains;
Where the breathing summer fills
All the deep hearts of our valleys
With a sapphire's glimmering light,
Where a golden river glitters
Through each blue, burnt August night."

And those lines seem to apply equally well to the country that is the setting to the Tennessee Centennial.

But no landscape owes all its charm to the things that are distinguished by the eye. The things unseen, the things that the mind's eye alone can distinguish, are what gives the peculiar charm to all those places where gigantic endeavor has reached its predestined end. That point where the army of England rose suddenly from its trenches, a terrible apparition of Gothic power in the teeth of advancing France, has a spell for the imagination that makes Waterloo as impressive as the Alps. It is only when a beautiful landscape, one that fills the esthetic sense with its richness of form and color, it is only when such a landscape has this undertone of heroic association that the power of landscape is realized.

ETERNAL CAMPING-GROUNDS.

And in the landscape about Nashville there is much to stimulate the imagination. It is gay enough, now, on this gently sloping hillside, with its camp of tinsel palaces, but it was not always so. The holiday crowds that will eddy through the Centennial will set their feet upon the very spots where once there trod the feet of soldiers. It is conceivable that some one who reads this article will lift a careless shoe from what, had he the eyes of the spirit, he would see was a bleeding footprint of the wounded. It was made long since, and those were cruel days, but their reality must not die. Both the armies which played their desperate game around this city have added to the honor of the American name, and in the heart of every American the roll of their drums endures. One pauses amid the turmoil of the fair to close his eyes and behold these hills and valleys, not as they are to-day, but as they were of old when the great figures of the Civil War thronged among them.

Well may he do so, dwelling in imagination on those things which he can no longer see. The shadow of that great war is still in all our hearts, growing larger and larger with time, and waiting for its historian. Some day its Carlyle will appear and that tragedy of the divided people which misunderstood itself will unfold in gleams of lightning amid a pomp of drums. But the time has not come, and meantime we must imagine things for ourselves. Who of us has not brother or cousin, or father or friend, who went down in the charge of the guns, or reeled in his saddle when the volley crashed, or lay dying long hours among the wounded? And it is all over and the tragedy is no more, and we seek to realize the blessedness of the present by recalling, in solemn awe, the heroic sadness of the past. To-day we are where that is easy to do, and all the more worth doing because in the midst of a celebration which emphasizes, in a peculiar sense, the restored unity of the whole nation.

And now, once more, go up upon the hill behind the Centennial. Look out, again, across this smiling country, and bethink you of the past, of what stern things befell before the present could be possible. Look down upon the grounds of the Centennial, and as the night draws near take unto yourself the eyes of the spirit. At the gathering of the dusk turn back the hand upon the dial for five and thirty years; then open all the secret places of imagination. Behold the transformation! Where, a moment since, you saw the buildings of the Centennial, there is now a forest. Among the trees you can just make out the tents of the soldiers. At most times in those "Darkest Days of the Republic" the tents will be those of the Federals and the Stars and Stripes will be waving above the wood. But sometimes, the blue columns will fade away to the northward and the gal-

lant, desperate, ill-starred men in gray will take their place. And as this ebb and flow goes on, it will be punctuated every now and then by the roar of battle. There, to the south, but a few miles away, was fought the battle of Nashville, where Hood finally failed. A little farther into distance, but still not far away, is the battle of Franklin, of that fierce and bloody struggle where fate began to abandon the Confederates. Stone River, to the rapt watcher from the hilltop, is in plain hearing and the roar of its carnage still echoes across the heavens.

This landscape is haunted, indeed, by more than the troops of purple shadows and lit by sterner lights than those of the golden sun. You have tarried too long upon the hilltop and as you come down into the fair the night overtakes you. The shadow of the hill falls heavily upon the buildings. Far away upon the east rim of the valley the Capitol glows a moment in soft rose pink, and then it also turns coldly gray. Here, among the buildings of the Centennial, the shadows lengthen and deepen, the color fades out of the water, leaving in its place a shimmer of steelly pallor, and the ghosts arise.

It is the grim past drifting in a cloud of dreams athwart the present. In the shadow of the Parthenon there is a roll of drums. By the faint starshine banners may be seen flapping darkly in the wind. They are torn and ragged, mere tattered silhouettes of heroism. Along the wide curve in front of the Machinery Building comes a rush of hurrying feet, the swaying, rhythmic beat of a column at double quick. Its bayonets twinkle to the stars—a jetting torrent of spear-points—and above its head flap the tattered standards. The doors of the Auditorium burst suddenly open and out of it, as out of barracks, pours a flood of bayonets. A dozen streams of onset blend together and sweep southward, only to encounter another spectral host and be swept back again to the north, until

both armies are swallowed by the blackness, the standards merge into the shadow, the drums roll feebly far off into the dark and there is nothing definite but the starshine. The ghosts of all the men who have ever bivouacked upon these grounds have reacted in the night the struggle in which they died.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CENTENNIAL.

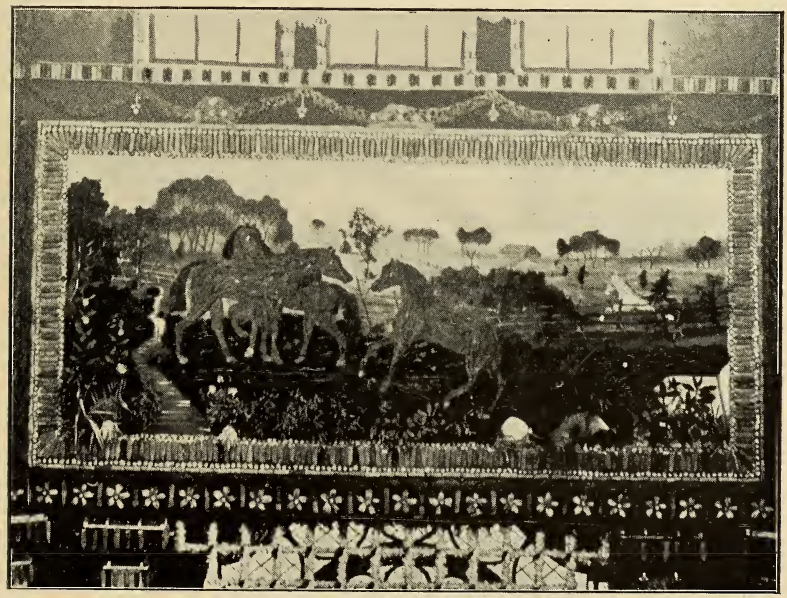
And here in the midst of the battlefields, where Tennessee made such a valiant attempt to break from the strong bond of the National Union, she is now celebrating her original entry into that estate. A new day is dawning, not only literally as the visions of the night fade away, while the shadows begin to lift, but figuratively, in the choice of the event to which this Southern State asks all the world to do honor. If the darkness in the shadow of the Parthenon has its ghosts of war and ruin, the brightness that is succeeding it brings forth the white statue of Athene, and thus:

> "The old order changes, giving place to new.
> And God fulfills himself in many ways."

THE NEW DAY.

You have transformed the Centennial by your own imagination; now go out of an early morning and watch that other transformation which is the sunrise. It is an early venture. The very latest you can risk is that moment of strange magic when the darkness of the night has changed imperceptibly to an altogether different one, the darkness of the dawn. You have not yet become aware of any increase of light. What you have realized is a vague, uncanny feeling, as if things fixed and immovable were slowly drawing near you.

Large, dark shapes of buildings are stealing gradually into the range of vision. Great bulks of blackness take on form and distinctness and resolve themselves into towers, domes, porticoes. Bit by bit, the very air itself is playing the same strange trick. The starshine is falling steadily nearer to the earth. A blue, never seen at any other hour of the twenty-four, glimmers downward from the descending stars and makes the whole atmosphere one endless, starry shimmer. This is neither



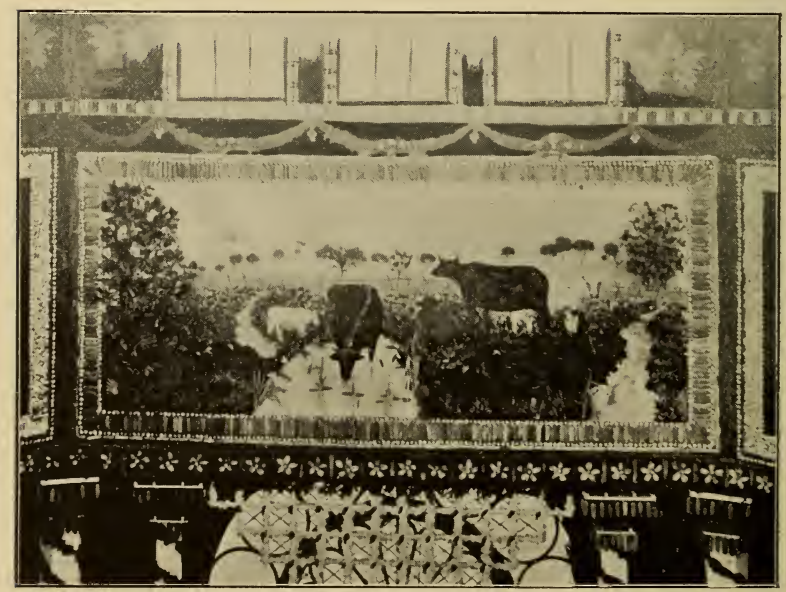
STOCK FARM—AGRICULTURE BUILDING.

night nor morning, but the most mysterious of all the hours, the hour before the dawn, when the ordinary conditions of life do not exist. You feel that you are no longer upon earth, but wandering about the streets of some dream city, tenanted by you know not what, and located in some far place unexplored by man.

The buildings loom vaster and vaster as the blue shimmer grows steadily deeper. The dome of the Agriculture Build-

ing is crowned by the stars themselves. The tower of the Auditorium springs away into the very heart of heaven. The pillars of the Parthenon have the height of mountains. The Statue of Athene is some immeasurably vast creature which is not to be approached.

And all these monsters of the dawn have the strange effect of being asleep. They are buildings no longer, they are living creatures wrapped in dead slumber, gazing eastward with



A CATTLE SCENE—AGRICULTURE BUILDING.

sightless eyes, that will be awakened by the dawn. Perhaps it is the continuous though imperceptible changing of the degree of distinctness in their details, due to the steadily growing light in the heavens, that produces this uncanny effect of being alive. But however produced, it is there. So real is it that one catches one's self treading lightly for fear of waking these enormous creatures that are all about one.

So far, the day has not appeared. The moment it does

appear, the instant the first yellow gleam strikes the Statue of Athene, the spell will be broken. One turns eastward to see if it be near.

It is not there, but it is coming. The starshine does not extend to the eastern horizon, and the hollow of the valley between the Centennial and the Capitol is still a great blue emptiness; but beyond that, the sky has begun to change. The city is vaguely visible. The spires, that shoot up here and there, and the huge bulk of the Capitol, are softly black against a sky that has grown pallid, whose blue has become metallic, shining almost like steel. And even as one looks upon it, the mass of the Capitol undergoes a change. It comes swinging forward, or else the sky behind it gradually swings back, but in some way it stands forth, changing from a hard outline flat against the curtain of steel blue to a mass of velvet darkness, in the midst of the shining air, with the curtain miles and miles behind it. The same instant an edge of crimson fire has crept along the east, and lies outstretched, as if the two wings of the morning, upon either hand of the Capitol.

Before it is too late turn about and catch another glimpse of the Centennial, while it is still overspread by the mystery of the hour before the dawn. Already that mystery is on the point of flight. In another moment it will be gone. You gaze upon the Parthenon, and watch a cooler, clearer light that is thrusting crisp glimmers behind column after column, throwing out each one into sharp relief. Then comes a moment of pause. The mystery has departed, but the day has not yet come. Suddenly you are aware that something is happening on the facade of the Parthenon. Things are moving forward from behind the columns. But you catch your breath before you notice that they are shadows. The dawn has come so quietly that you have not seen it, and you give a start as you

realize that the whole facade of the temple is gleaming in soft, rich cream color, and the yellow light of the morning is bathing it as with showers of gold.

THE GROUND PLAN.

You have seen the more striking aspects of the Centennial, and it is time for you to group them all into the effect that is to be final. And now, once more, as in your first impression, you are standing on the crown of the Rialto. This bridge is the key point of the whole fair. Lay three horseshoes with their tips together, one of them measurably east and west, the other two not quite at right angles to that direction, and you have a rough suggestion of the plan of the fair, with the Rialto at the meeting of the tips of the shoes. The Parthenon stands in the middle of the east and west shoe, with its facade fronting square to the bridge. That, perhaps, is a mistake. If the Temple were seen at an angle, as the spectator crosses the Rialto, the effect would be even more striking than it is. But the planning of the fair has been dictated by the desire to mass, as it were, the effect of contrast between the two sides of the valley. An air line cuts straight through the center of this main horseshoe, through the length of the Parthenon, through the Statue of Athene, through the middle of the Rialto and of the wide Capitol avenue that leads downward to the east, through the site of the future Chicago Building, and across the valley through the center of the Capitol itself.

THE POINT OF CLIMAX.

This crown of the Rialto is not, however, absolutely the finest point of view in the Centennial. To get to the point, which, having once found it, you will revisit time and again,

from which you will take your final and ineradicable impression, go down the western slope of the Rialto, turn to your right between the Parthenon and the immense pyramid that is the Building of Memphis, and keep on until you are stopped by the Commerce Building. There, at a point midway between the main entrance and the north end of the building, find a bench or set down a campstool, and dwell in peace for the rest of your days at the Centennial.

On your way to this finest spot of all you will have seen, again, much that is interesting. At the top of the Rialto, the little houses that hem you in—you have not forgotten the line, "Shylock's bridge with houses on it"— are cut by two arches, and as you look through the one to the north the graceful mass of the Agriculture Building fills the whole view. Advancing into the center of the arch, you widen the vista, other buildings come into sight, and you sweep the whole of the northerly horseshoe. The hollow of it is water; the right tip, the large Negro Building, with its white walls and maroon-topped cupolas; the left tip, that Egyptian pyramid, four square, a portico on each face, which Memphis, in a sort of pun upon itself, has set up for its habitation. Retreating to the roadway of the bridge, you come down to the base of the Athene, and if you turn leftward you may skirt the south horseshoe, in whose hollow is the square-towered Auditorium, which will seat 6,000, and continuing westward you may pass a dozen other buildings before you finally get to the point in front of the Commerce Building, where, when the weather is fine, is the view par excellence.

IONIAN SKIES.

To your right, in a blaze of sunshine, and so placed as to stand forth boldly into air, is the Parthenon. To the left is

the darker mass of the Pyramid, and beside it are other buildings. Directly in front is a wide space that is not at present broken by any building. The eye sweeps through it, past the shining warmth of the cream-colored columns of the Parthenon, across glimmering gold-green lawns into the hollow of the valley; there the green merges into blue, the blue finally into a bank of soft-toned iridescence where rows of brick houses touched by the sun gleam, even at this distance, in a sort of faint red dusk shot with whitish blue shadows and above that mount of houses against a sky that is momentarily free from smoke and gleams and glows with the intense shining of a color as blue as sapphire and yet as full of gold as it is of blue, against such a sky, in clearer whiteness than you have yet seen it, is the Capitol.

But, charming as the outlook is, your eyes come back to a point less distant, and here, you are suddenly aware, is the culmination and the justification of the whole design of the Centennial. Wander about among the buildings of the fair as much as you see fit, and let your eyes go whithersoever they will, but in spite of you they will come back continually to one point. At first, the strong general effect, the two sides of the valley, will chain your attention, and the Capitol will predominate in every view. But bit by bit, the stormy modern element will pass over into secondary importance. The ingenious modern buildings, created for a day, will, bit by bit, take on an embarrassed expression, as of mere subjects, unexpectedly come to court and abashed before the Queen; you will feel that you are yourself of them and with them and as much on sufferance as they are. What is this disquieting sense that is creeping into you, this feeling that you are being weighed in the balance and found wanting? At last you perceive. You realize that there is nothing any longer upon which

you are able to fix your attention except that majestic simplicity, that sublime union of grace, dignity, power, which is the genius of the Greek race embodied in the Parthenon.

THE GOLDEN AGE AGAIN.

Greece has taken you captive; has come upon you as the dawn did, so quietly that you did not know it till it was done. This is not merely the celebration of the admission of the State of Tennessee into the American Union; it is, likewise, to you, from the moment when this gigantic contrast of National ideals, far vaster than the contrast you saw at first, enters and possesses you, it is thenceforward the celebration of the admission into your consciousness of the full realization of what Shelley meant when he wrote:

> "Greece and her foundations are
> Built below the shock of war,
> Based on the crystalline sea
> Of thought and its eternity."

And now, when at last you have realized this vaster contrast, the Parthenon is like a basilisk. You can not keep your eyes away from it. Mere lath and plaster as you know it to be, it still reproduces the lines, dimensions, and, as far as we know, the colors of the original. The whole majestic design is there in all its appalling beauty. And appalling is the only word to express it. The sense of inferiority which grows and grows as one reflects more deeply upon what is the true significance of this combination of exquisite grace with towering strength, that sense is a revelation. Of course we have all read of this majesty of the Greek design, and we have seen the Parthenon upon paper, but most of us, except in an exami-

nation at college, have never thought about it until now. And there it stands, in the midst of the sunshine, victorious, never to be forgotten, in possession of our imaginations forever.

And behind it we see the Greek nature, and we comprehend its civilization. Where, there, was the show, the ostentation, the sound and fury of the modern world? The men who conceived this building must have had the qualities which it perpetuates—sweetness, nobility, loftiness, calmness, strength. There was Tennyson's ideal of

> "That gentleness
> That when it weds with Manhood makes a man."

And looking at all this, at what the Parthenon signifies as well as what it embodies, captivated by the matchless serenity of its charm, realizing its contrast to the nineteenth century, one asks again: "To what result is all this pageant of American material progress going forward?"

And one turns hastily away lest one look too long upon the unattainable and lose heart and despair of his generation. And yet, at least, it has set before its eyes a model without compare.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 019 713 606 6

PRESS OF
THE BRANDON COMPANY
NASHVILLE